

## Child Safeguarding Statement

### What is safeguarding?

Safeguarding is the action that is taken to promote the welfare of children and young people and protect them from harm. While protecting young people from abuse is one part of safeguarding, young people also need safeguarding in order to develop, achieve their full potential and be empowered to make the decisions to do so. This includes ensuring they have access to the services they require.

### Name of service being provided

AHEAD East Hall, UCD, Carysfort Avenue, Blackrock, Co Dublin

### Nature of Service Provided and Principles to Safeguard Young People from Harm

AHEAD is an independent non-profit organisation working to create inclusive environments in education and employment for people with disabilities. The main focus of our work is further education and training, higher education and graduate employment.

**Better Options** is an annual national AHEAD event providing information for third level students with disabilities who are considering their post leaving certificate educational options. This event takes place online and attendees must register in advance. The event is designed to provide information and advice to these young people on accessing tertiary education with a disability and the services and supports that are available to them.

We at AHEAD are committed to safeguarding the well-being of young people and of vulnerable adults who avail of our online services. Our aim is to provide useful information to support and empower young people with disabilities as they transition from second level education into tertiary education or into the workforce. To facilitate this AHEAD has developed a range of policies and procedures for employees and volunteers working with young people as part of the Better Options college fair. These have been designed to create a safe and inclusive environment for those young people who choose to participate in our event.

## Risk Assessment

We have carried out an assessment of any potential for harm to a young person while availing of our online services. Below is a list of the areas of risk identified and the list of procedures for managing these risks.

	<b>Risk Identified</b>	<b>Procedure in Place</b>
1	A young person does not have consent to attend an event or to be online due to concerns around accessing inappropriate content while on the internet	Registration forms must be completed by a parent/guardian where they explicitly provide their consent for their child/ward to attend the event. Parent/guardian contact details, including mobile phone number, must be provided in case of any concerns arising during or after the event regarding any aspect of the young person's safety. Registration will be monitored closely throughout the sign up process to ensure these details are being provided.
2	A young persons' contact details being exposed to a third party	AHEAD prioritises the privacy of all attendees who are signed up to any of our events and saves all participant details on an encrypted private server. The only third party with access to the young person's data is Eventbrite who have confirmed that all personal data provided will be protected in line with the <a href="#">Eventbrite Privacy Policy</a> privacy policy.  AHEAD will consistently review their processes to ensure that all personal data provided is stored and used in line with Child First Guidelines and GDPR regulations.
3	A young person discloses personal data via online interactive tools, for example the chat and Q&A feature in a webinar set up.	AHEAD will have a dedicated staff member monitoring the interactive features within the webinars, including the chat and Q&A features throughout the event to ensure that no sensitive data is disclosed. As part of housekeeping the host of the event will also inform all attendees of some terms of reference for engaging in the session where they will notify attendees not to use their full name, inappropriate language or personal details when engaging within the session. Where presenters are seeking participant feedback they will be asked to use Mentimeter where responses are anonymous rather than other online tools.  The event organiser will brief all speakers and staff involved in the event in any capacity of all terms of reference and key areas to be aware of throughout the event. This includes removing someone from an event who is not complying with these terms of reference.
4	A young person is presented with or has access to inappropriate content.	All speakers and staff will be fully briefed on the nature of the event, the nature of the audience and the terms of reference for all events. Should AHEAD have any concerns that anyone involved in the event may be presenting material that is inappropriate for the intended audience they will be removed from the programme. All those invited to speak are well-known to AHEAD and have a longstanding relationship with the organisation.  Staff managing any online interactions will be fully briefed on the terms of reference and, should anyone seek to share anything inappropriate in this manner, they will be removed from the event.

5	A young person discloses an issue of concern to a staff or volunteer in a one to one drop in session. These drop in sessions provide a young person with a disability the space to ask specific questions to designated experts regarding their own situation and circumstances.	The two Information Officers providing this service will be Garda Vetted. The drop in sessions will be hosted in separate online breakout rooms with attendees lined up to be admitted into the meeting room one by one. The attendees will be welcomed by two staff members who will then send them into one of the breakout rooms with the next available Information Officer. All staff involved will be briefed on Child First regulations.  If a young person discloses something to one of the information which leads them to believe that the young person may be at risk, the Information officer will inform the young person that they [Information Officer] will need to contact someone in order to ensure their safety. AHEAD has a reporting procedure in place and this will be followed at all times should a report need to be made. All staff, including those in the drop in sessions, will be fully briefed on this process and will be aware of the DLP to go to should they have any concerns.
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## Procedures

Our Child Safeguarding Statement has been developed in line with requirements under the Children First Act 2015, *Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children (2017)*, and Tusla's *Child Safeguarding: A Guide for Policy, Procedure and Practice*. In addition to the procedures listed in our risk assessment, the following procedures support our intention to safeguard children while they are availing of our service:

- Procedure for the management of allegations of abuse or misconduct against workers/volunteers of a child availing of our service;
- Procedure for provision of and access to child safeguarding training and information, including the identification of the occurrence of harm;
- Procedure for the reporting of child protection or welfare concerns to Tusla;
- Procedure for maintaining a list of the persons (if any) in the relevant service who are mandated persons;
- Procedure for appointing a relevant person.

**All procedures listed are available upon request.**

## Implementation

We recognise that implementation is an on-going process. Our service is committed to the implementation of this Child Safeguarding Statement and the procedures that support our intention to keep young people safe from harm while availing of our service.

This Child Safeguarding Statement will be reviewed on 31 August 2022, or as soon as practicable after there has been a material change in any matter to which the statement refers.

**Local Tusla Contacts:** Child and Family Agency, Dublin South East / Wicklow, Carysfort House, Carysfort Avenue, Blackrock, Co Dublin.

